

The Clipper Visits Sabina Crosby

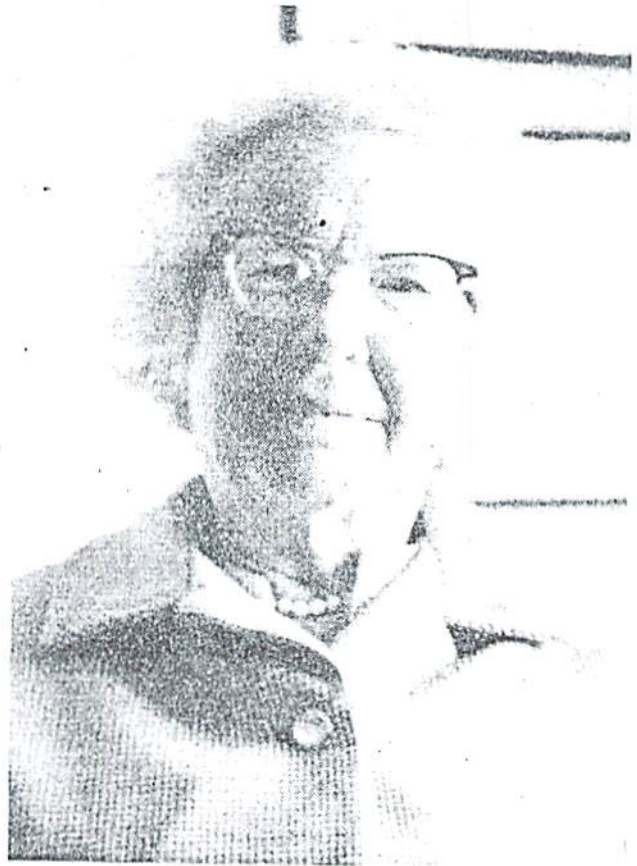
By MADDIE MERRIFIELD

It was early. The tide was out. A gray mist hung low over the burnished November marsh grasses stretching out to where the few remaining sailboats slept on their sides awaiting the return of the tide. It was a captivating view, one which changes daily, according to Sabina Crosby as she shared the panorama from her office window at the Drew House on Washington St. The sound and smell of the coffeepot perking and Sabina's cheery smile of welcome quickly dispelled the dreariness of the morning fog.



The Charles Drew House
Duxbury, Mass. 1826

The Drew House, built in 1826, is one of the historical houses owned by The Duxbury Rural and Historical Society, of which Sabina is the executive secretary. A year ago the Society renovated the building after the Duxbury Art Assn moved its headquarters to the old fire station on Franklin St., which they bought from the town for \$1. The Dorothy Wentworth Research Library was established at the Drew House and after the rooms were painted and carpeted, Sabina tastefully furnished it with period pieces, including a couch left to the Society by Penelope Noyes. The couch was too big for the King Caesar House and had been stored in the barn along with a secretary, which also made its way to the Drew House meeting room. Sabina found a bookcase and several chairs in the attic of the Bradford House, and with several other pieces "on loan," the room was completed.



Sabina Crosby

Sabina works at the Drew House every morning from 8-12, and if you haven't been there this past year, it's well worth the visit. The research library is full of old books on Duxbury, Civil War books donated by the GAR, and many others. Sabina was especially pleased to find a collection of books belonging to Charles Drew and his daughter, Temperance Drew, inscribed with their names and the dates 1824-1829. The house had been given to the DR&HS in 1916 by the Drew family. Sabina has summered in Duxbury since 1911 and remembers when the building was the Co-op store. "I would run down here on Sundays to pick up what Mother forgot to buy."

At the Drew House, the Society sells books about Duxbury, notepaper, postcards, maps, bookmarks and Argus cup plates made by Pairpoint Glass Works. The Duxbury cup plate is one of the few remaining octagonal cup plates, and it comes in 9 colors. For its centennial next year, the DR&HS will offer a new cup plate depicting the King Caesar House, along with a hand-painted dessert plate, also picturing the King Caesar House. Both will be limited to 500 and will be collector's items.

Though not a collector herself, Sabina did buy a cup plate for \$3 during Plymouth's 250th celebration exhibit of "Remember the Ladies." Priscilla Mayberry, her friend and DR&HS chairman of sales, sorely regretted not buying one, so Sabina wrapped hers up as a Christmas present for Priscilla. Shortly after, Priscilla was offered \$300 for it. She called Sabina and they decided to sell it and split the sum.

Sabina is busy with all the affairs of the DR&HS, besides keeping the books, including monthly executive meetings. She helps with the summer coffees and lectures, the chowder supper and the picnic on Clark's Island, and the Sarah Wingate Taylor lecture series.

The Historical Society owns 4 houses: the Bradford House, King Caesar House, the Drew House and Cedarfield on Clark's Island. Cedarfield was willed to the DR&HS by Sarah Wingate Taylor to be used for educational purposes. It is rented to a professor for the summer and was also used by 2 PhD candidates from Rutgers studying ornithology. The 2 girls braved the spring months on the island without heat, lights or plumbing and set up blinds to watch for Black Night Herons and other birds in the island sanctuary.

* * *

Born in West Newton, Sabina graduated from the Bennett School in Millbrook, N.Y. in 1922 and married William Edgar Crosby Jr. in 1926. She has 4 children; her 3 sons graduated from Harvard and

her daughter from Skidmore. Of her 11 grandchildren, 3 are Stamford graduates and one a graduate of Colorado College. She is also a great grandmother, twice over, and has managed to see her California family 3 times this past year.

As if Sabina isn't busy enough, she says, "I also moonlight." She is secretary to the nationwide organization of Soule Kindred, which sends out quarterly magazines.

Sabina's life has been steeped in Duxbury history, not only in her jobs, but in her home as well, for she lives in Bos'n's Locker on Washington St. She moved there in 1968 to live year-round in the 3-room house built originally to store rope during the shipbuilding era. Through the years it was a shoe factory, a post office, a telephone company, a gift shop, a yarn shop; and when her aunt, Sabina Marshall, owned it, a shop called Straw Imports.

In addition to raising her family, Sabina's list of accomplishments is impressive: She has been on the executive boards of the Junior League of Boston, the Francis Willard Homes, Household Nursing Inc., the Student House Inc., and the New England Farm and Garden Assn as international cooperation chairman, vice president and twice president. On the National Woman's Farm and Garden Assn she was international cooperation chairman, resolutions committee chairman, nominating committee chairman and a vice president. She has attended triennial conferences of the Associated Country Women of the World in Scotland, Australia, Ireland and Norway.

This fall Sabina was presented with a National Recognition Award for "her extraordinary and outstanding dedication and service to her Division, National Assn and the Associated Country Women of the World for more than 30 years."

Through the years Sabina has worked for the Women's Republican Club, Wheelock College, the Atlantic Monthly, and in the financial aid department at the Harvard Business School. She has been director of the Duxbury Art Assn and a member of the DAR and the Colonial Dames of America.

When Sabina turned 70, a neighbor, Gerry Powell, wrote a song in tribute, called "My Fair Lady" and sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Her family gathered 'round and sang it for her birthday. It was a special time for all the family and though a number of years has passed since it was written, the ending is still most appropriate.

My Fair Lady

*In Dux-bur-ee there is a gal
Whose name I'm sure you know
For she had an aunt Sabina
Who was always on the go.*

*She'd buy a house then sell it
Then buy another one,
For fixing up old houses
Was for her a lot of fun.*

*Then she said "Sabina dear
Because you're named for me
You should take my Bos'n's Locker
Where I lived most happily."*

*So she moved down from the city
To our town of Duxbury
And she entered all activities
With great efficiency.*

*She started sumptuous dinners
At the Drew House down the street
And as clerk for things historical
Wrote letters so complete.*

*Once she took us to Nantucket
On a very rainy day.
We all looked spashed and dirty
Which was NOT Sabina's way.*

*She wandered through the ferry
In pretty shoes and hat
And passed hot soup to all our group
No matter where we sat.*

*O, Sabina, our hearts go out to you.
It never seems hard work at all
No matter what you do.*

*She ran the Farm & Garden
With endless trips to town.
For them she had a luncheon
Fifty ladies all came down.*

*The little Bos'n's Locker
Has an open door for you
As hostess of delicious meals
And then she is not through.*

*Her little red Volkswagen
Goes here and there in town
And if any are in trouble
She will never let you down.*

*O, Sabina, how pleased your aunt would be
To hear these praises sung to you
As you reach seventy.*

*Happy Birthday, our Fair Lady
We drink a toast to you, BUT
We think you must be spoofing --
You're not more than 42.*